

Bethel, PA – For more than four years, residents of Garnet Valley have raised concerns to the United States Postal Service. Upon taking office last year, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) went to work, bringing them to the attention of top postal officials. As the culmination of more than 35 meetings, research and consistent interaction with concerned constituents, Congressman Sestak announced that the Postal Service will issue Garnet Valley its own Zip Code, 19060, effective in July 2009. —

Joined at a community meeting by Philadelphia District Manager Frank Neri, who oversees postal operations in the area, the Congressman thanked residents for contacting him about postal service and USPS officials for taking the time and putting forth the effort to find sufficient cost savings to support the Congressman's proposal of a new Zip Code. Congressman Sestak, acknowledging the financial constraints on USPS, worked with the Postal Service to demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of creating the new Zip Code. The Congressman's extensive advocacy on his constituents' behalf reached the level of the Post Master General and his staff. When the cost efficiency was confirmed, USPS took the rare step of issuing a mail survey to the people of Garnet Valley this summer, asking them to vote on whether they wanted a new, unique zip code for their community. With the majority of respondents in favor, USPS established 19060 to cover the Garnet Valley portion of the current 19061 Zip Code, which includes portions of Bethel and Concord Townships.

"This is a prime example of good government," said Congressman Sestak. "In this case, I was engaged with a group of understandably concerned constituents and a very supportive Postal Service regional office and we were able work out this important local issue.

"Throughout this process, I have been mindful that the current Postmaster General has set an objective of finding ways to say yes, not excuses for saying no. As a representative of the people in my District, it is my job to effectively communicate their concerns through the correct channels and ensure that they are appropriately addressed. I am pleased that the Postal Service has found a way to achieve efficiency in mail delivery as a result of constituent concerns. The fact that the proposal contained increased efficiency and cost savings is the reason Garnet Valley citizens were provided the opportunity for a new Zip Code."

As various news outlets, including the Delaware County Daily Times, have reported, the Congressman has met with residents to address mail service issues in Garnet Valley. Since January 2007, the Congressman has remained engaged with constituents through multiple town halls and written correspondences, and has participated in more than a dozen discussions with postal officials.

Bethel and Concord Townships have experienced significant growth in the past decade, 52 percent and 38 percent respectively. While the Postal Service ordinarily absorbs growth by assigning new deliveries to existing Zip Codes, Congressman Sestak has worked with the Postal Service to seize this opportunity to establish a new one, addressing his constituents concerns.

An area must meet specific criteria to receive a new Zip Code, including operational efficiency. In his communications with constituents on this issue, the Congressman has stressed that USPS is not federally funded and uses costs to make decisions just as any private business would. Through extensive research into USPS procedures, the Congressman and the Postal Service have found a way in which a new Zip Code might be created for a qualifying area at minimal expense. The low cost of this process is especially important in light of the many financial strains the Post Service faces from rising fuel to healthcare costs. In addition, the volume of mail has dropped as a result of electronic communications and commerce, while the while the number of delivery points the agency serves is increasing. These realities have, in part, led to the agency's \$1.6 billion shortfall.

"Many constituents have brought postal issues to my attention and it is important not to accept that nothing can be done about them," said Congressman Sestak. "The outcome of this nearly two-year process shows that while we must recognize USPS' challenges and keep in mind its mandate not to have a budget shortfall, there are often steps, such as in the case of Garnet Valley, that can be taken."

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the Congress.

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